

GROUP DISCUSSION

What is a Group Discussion

Group Discussion is a discussion by a group of people which involves an **exchange of thoughts and ideas**. Group Discussions are largely used by institutes where there is a high level of competition. **Group Discussions are NOT debates.**

What is Evaluated ?

Group Discussion is a means to assess **one's overall personality**.

The skills judged are PERSONALITY, KNOWLEDGE, COMMUNICATION SKILL and LEADERSHIP

All that one observes in a GD can be categorized into two broad areas: the **Content and the Process**. The content is all about the 'matter' (or the 'what') spoken in the GD. whereas, the process refers to the '**how**', '**when**' and '**why**' of the GD. Both are equally important and need adequate attention at all stages. A high quality content with no regard to the 'process' is worthless.

What is the right time to enter to ensure I am heard ?

The opportunities to enter are **First Members**, Last Members, Middle Members. The best time to enter is in the first so that you maintain uniqueness of your points, but at the risk of losing out on others points which you could build on. If you find it uncomfortable to be the first to take the plunge listen out others and then enter along with the middle/last members. Frankly, there is no right or wrong time to enter or not. Just make sure that you speak out your points in the initial round of discussion.

How necessary is it to use examples for illustrating an idea ?

Using an example simplifies the understanding of your point to the group. Substantiation is like putting a seal of authenticity to your statement. Try and use relevant facts/figures wherever possible. Use an example or two for a point that you wish to project.

What is summarization ?

Converting the entire discussion into 4 or 5 points without any bias to fully represent the thoughts of the group. In some cases, everyone might be asked to summarize **so you must form a habit of summarizing.**

What is the normal duration of a GD ?

A Group Discussion is generally of 10-20 minutes duration.

How many panel members are there to evaluate?

There are usually 1/3-4 panel members to evaluate.

Is there time given for preparation after the topic is given and before starting the GD ?

Usually some time (2-5 minutes) is given to collect one's thoughts, but there could be instances when this does not happen, so it is best not to bank on this.

Should I address the panel or the group members ?

Don't ever make the mistake of addressing the panel members. The Group Discussion is between you and the other members, not the panel members. You must avoid even looking at the panel members while the Group Discussion is in progress. **Just ignore their existence.**

How should I address the other group members ?

If you are initiating the discussion, you could do so by collectively addressing the group as "Friends". Subsequently, you could use names (if the group has had a round of self-introduction prior to starting the discussion and you remember the names) or simply use pronouns like "he" or "she".

Are the group members supposed to keep track of the time or will the panel keep track ?

It would be good if you are conscious of the time, but not to the point of getting so distracted looking at your watch that you do not contribute to the discussion.

The Do's and Don'ts of Group Discussion

The Do's.

Listen to others. It is not necessary to initiate a Group Discussion.

Initiate the discussion if you are familiar with the topic.

Intervene if the discussion is turning out to be hostile. It reflects your leadership.

Speak to the point without Repeating.

Back your points with Facts and Figures.
Be gentle with your presentation.
Be Natural, Calm and Maintain your Composure.
Be Participative and Reciprocative.
Say 'Thank You' before ending your presentation.
Think before you speak.
Say what you feel, without going in "Favour"/"Against".

The Don'ts

Do not be loud or aggressive.
Do not go overboard with enthusiasm if you are familiar with the topic.
Do not interrupt other speakers.
Do not deprecate other speakers.
Do not speak first if you are unfamiliar with the topic. Grab the opportunity to speak, you also grab the attention of the examiner and your fellow candidates.
Do not change your opinions.
Do not ask irrelevant questions.
Do not stop abruptly.
Do not get nervous if the previous speakers have presented their points in a better way.
Do not exhibit your emotions.

Tips

Always be the initiator and concluder of the Group Discussion then being a participant.
But if you are participant always try to be the most key participant.
Put points firmly and always try to get others support too.
If you find that the discussion is going off the track then never loose an opportunity to bring it back to stream this is the best point to score max.
Try to keep latest information on the topic .
Be very polite , people may try to provoke you to get more points but try to keep cool.
Most important, don't wait for your turn to speak when discussion is on. Interrupt politely if you want to put forward your points.
Last but not the least keep a tab on the time given for discussion. Score points by wrapping up the discussion if you feel that the discussion is heating but the time is going to be over.
During conclusion, do end with the conclusion note. That shows your leadership quality.